



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	III	Case Management	8-5-2019
Chapter:	C	Case Oversight and Management	Revised
Subchapter:	9	Consents	Date: 9.16.19
Issuance:	200	<b>Overnight Travel by Children and Youth in Resource Family Placements</b>	

### Purpose:

This policy establishes policy and procedures related to the travel of children and youth in a resource family home under the supervision of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P).

### Policy:

#### A) Overnight Travel and Enrichment Encouraged

Because overnight travel, with or without resource families can provide children and youth with valuable and enjoyable experiences that enhance their well-being, CP&P supports opportunities for overnight travel and enrichment as long as they do not conflict with existing court orders or provisions of the case plan.

Overnight travel does not include regular, frequent, or routine travel that establishes a pattern of overnight travel necessitating a review and/or amendment to a case plan.

#### B) Overnight Travel for Seven (7) or Fewer Nights

Subject to limitations in (F) below, resource parents, using the reasonable and prudent parent standard, are authorized to allow or disallow occasional overnight travel for seven (7) nights or fewer. This includes overnight travel with or without the caregiver. If the children and youth are given permission by the resource parent to travel overnight, notification shall be provided to the Worker or Supervisor at least two (2) business days prior to the overnight travel, or as early as practical and feasible. If children and youth stay outside of the home they are placed for no more than one (1) overnight, and notification of two (2) business days is impractical, notification to the Worker or Supervisor shall be given by the resource parent the business day following the overnight travel.

### **C) Overnight Travel Over Seven (7) Nights**

Resource parents must seek permission from the Worker for the resource parent to make the decision for the children and youth to participate in overnight travel that is over seven (7) nights. The resource parent notifies the Worker of the request for authorization at least one (1) month prior to the anticipated date of departure of any vacation/trip. The resource family parent advises the Worker of the dates the family or children and youth plans to be away and the location(s) where they can be reached, if necessary.

Subject to limitations in (F), the Worker, in consultation with the supervisor, shall authorize this overnight travel if:

1. It reflects age appropriate experiences of peers, and
2. It is not specifically objected to by the child's parent or parents, if such parent's parental rights have not been terminated. **See E)** below.

### **D) International Travel**

International travel of children and youth in placement must be approved by the Local Office Manager (LOM) after consultation with a Deputy Attorney General (DAG). International travel may be prohibited to countries that pose unique safety risks or if there are concerns about the foreign country's recognition of the resource parent or CP&P's parental and custody rights.

Resource family parents must notify the Worker of a plan to travel internationally with the child, or for the child to travel internationally six (6) months before the date of departure, if feasible, but not less than four (4) months before the planned departure date. As soon as a request is made, the Worker must notify the DAG and convene a planning meeting with the child's team.

The Worker shall ensure that the case plan is revised to detail how legal requirements related to the following will be met while the children and youth are traveling:

1. Amendments in the family visitation plan,
2. Amendments in any plans for treatment or therapy,
3. How any existing health or behavioral health care needs will be met, and
4. Description of how health care needs will be met in the event of an emergency. Note that Medicaid does not cover medical care outside of the country.

### **E) Parental Notification and Right to Object to Overnight Travel over Seven (7) Nights or International Travel**

When the Worker receives notification of planned international travel or overnight travel in excess of seven (7) nights, and verifies that it does not conflict with

provisions of the case plan or a court order, the Worker shall notify the biological or legal parent (if parental rights have not been terminated) of the planned overnight trip and seek written consent, which should be documented in the case file. If the parent informs the Worker verbally or in writing that he or she does not consent, the Worker consults with the DAG as soon as this opposition is known so that actions can be taken to resolve the issue. The DAG will advise the Worker on how to proceed.

## **F) Travel Conflicts**

Any travel identified in this issuance cannot conflict with:

1. Court ordered visitation, unless all the parties agree on alternative visitation arrangements and the agreement is documented in the case note in NJ Spirit.
2. Scheduled court appearances, unless the court has provided authorization.
3. Scheduled therapeutic or medical treatment pursuant to the case plan or court order which cannot be postponed or rescheduled.
4. A court order which specifically prohibits the travel or otherwise contains stipulations which preclude such travel.
5. Any educational obligations, including school attendance, not in conflict with compulsory attendance requirements set forth at N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6, by the educational institution or Local Board of Education, or equivalent, in advance of the travel.

Statutory and Regulatory requirements under the Department of Education, identified above, allow for individual schools and Local Boards of Education to determine what is an excused absence and the number of absences considered excessive. A Worker or Supervisor shall ensure communication between the resource parent and appropriate school or Local Board of Education authority to confirm that the planned overnight travel does not create an excessive school absence or have a detrimental impact on the child or youth's academic performance.

## **Procedures:**

### **1) Notification to the Worker or Supervisor**

- a. Notification to the Worker or Supervisor related to overnight travel within this issuance shall be provided verbally or in writing.
- b. The notification about the overnight travel shall, at a minimum, include:
  - i. Name of the adult in overnight travel location (if traveling without resource parent).

- ii. Address where the children and youth will be spending the overnight travel.
  - iii. Phone number for the adult identified in (i) above and/or the address provided in (ii) above.
- c. The Worker or Supervisor shall document the conversation on a Contact Sheet, [Form 26-52](#).

## 2) International Travel

- a. The Worker or Supervisor shall provide and document the information received in Procedure 1) above and:
  - i. Contact the Central Office Security Advisor to discuss international travel and appropriate precautions.
  - ii. Review travel information on the United States Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) website for information related to any relevant alerts or travel restrictions. [LINK HERE](#)

## Key Terms (Definitions):

- “Reasonable and prudent parent standard “means the standard of care provided to a child which is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and well-being of the child, encourage the emotional and developmental growth of the child, and promote the best interests of the child.”
- “Worker” means a professional member of the CP&P field staff, who is assigned Child Welfare Services referrals and/or Child Protective Services reports to assess or investigate, case management of families in open case status, or who performs "specialty" functions in CP&P caseloads, such as "adolescent Workers" or "Permanency Workers." In this issuance, Worker does not include a Resource Worker.

## Related Information:

- [FAQ - Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard Guidance for Child Welfare Professionals](#)
- [FAQ - Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard \(RPPS\) Guidance for Caregivers in Resource Family Homes](#)
- [FAQ - Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard: Information for Youth and Young Adults](#)
- [FAQ - Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard Guidance for Parents and Legal Guardians](#)

**Policy History:**

- 9.16.19 – Added Frequently Asked Questions.
- 8.5.19 - Removed from [CP&P III-C-9-100](#) and moved into separate issuance.